

"He's like he is because he's insecure! He likes the sexpots; that shows you where his taste lies."

My taste lies somewhere in that general vicinity, too, so if you happen to be in the market for a new scriptwriter, just keep in mind that I'm available, and that I work cheap—if you know what I mean.

MY WAR WITH THE MACHINES

BY WOODY ALLEN

The protean Woody Allen, one of the most successful and inventive comedy performer-writers in many years, has recently expanded his talents to the worlds of film and theater. His celluloid success, "What's New, Pussycat?" was followed by "What's Up, Tiger Lily?" and "Take the Money and Run." Allen's play, "Don't Drink the Water," was Merrick-produced to smash reviews. And, of course, 007 will never be the same after Woody's starring stint in "Casino Royale." Has success spoiled Woody Allen? No: "I just fail with a better class of women now," he is quoted as saying by Time, which describes him as "a droll troll, a neurotic elf, a Freudian slip with legs." This talented, if self-acclaimed, actor, director, writer and flea gynecologist, voices the frustrations and fantasies of us all as he confronts the wonders of modern civilization in "My War with the Machines."

YEARS AGO I went to Hollywood looking for a job. Actually, I had seen an ad in *The New York Times* that said, "Boy wanted, part time, to direct *Cleopatra*." So I went out to the Coast and while I was there, I went to this big party. I took a producer's very unattractive daughter, but I was social climbing. She was a really bad-looking girl. Facially, she resembled Louis Armstrong's voice. And while I was at the party, I met a very big Hollywood producer who spoke to me about a job. At that time, they wanted to make an elaborate Cinemascope musical comedy based on the Dewey decimal system, and they wanted me to punch it up. I had worked as a writer in New York. I had written a TV show called *Surprise Divorce*. We used to take a happily married couple out of the audience every week and divorce them on television. Anyhow, I got the job.

So I go out to the producer's office in Burbank, and I walk into his building, and I get into the elevator, and there's nobody in the elevator. No people. No buttons on the wall. No elevator operator. Nothing. And I hear a voice say, "Kindly call out your floors, please." And I look around, and there's nothing. And I hear it again. "Kindly call out your floors, please." Now I'm a great panicker. In the event of any type of emergency, I lose control of the sphincter muscle. Anyway, I hear this voice, and finally I look on the wall and it's printed: "This elevator runs on a sonic principle. Please state your floor and the elevator will take you there."

So I said, "Three, please."

And the doors close. And the elevator starts going up to three. And on the way up I felt very self-conscious, because I speak with a slight New York accent; and the elevator spoke quite well. And I get off, and as I'm walking down the hall, I thought I heard the elevator make a remark. So I turn quickly, but the doors are shut and it's gone down. I didn't want to get involved with an elevator anyway—not in Hollywood.

But here's the paranoid part of the story. I have never had good relations with mechanical objects. Anything I can't reason

with or kiss or fondle, I get into trouble with. I have a clock that runs counterclockwise, and my toaster shakes my toast from side to side, and burns it, and I hate my shower. My shower hated me first, but then it got to be a thing of counter-hostility. If I'm taking a shower and someone in America uses their water, that's it for me! I leap from the tub with a red streak down my back. I paid \$150 for a tape recorder, and as I talk into it, it goes, "I know, I know!"

I have a Polaroid camera; it started putting out pictures in two minutes. I didn't want to say anything. Then it started putting out pictures in five minutes. Finally, I got a little note that said, "Come in tomorrow for them!" So be nice to your camera.

I have a suntan lamp. As I sit under it, it rains on me.

All right, one night some years ago, I was home alone. I called a meeting of my possessions. I got everything I owned. My toaster, my clock, my blender, into the living room. They had never been in the living room before. I spoke to them. I spoke to each appliance. I said, "I know what's going on, and cut it out!" I was brilliant. You would've loved me. I opened with a joke, and then I moved on and made each point.

I was very firm. Then I put them back where they belonged. And I felt good. Strong. Two days later, I'm watching my portable television set—Doctor Joyce Brothers—when suddenly the picture begins to jump up and down. All right, I always talk before I hit. I went up to the set and I said, "I thought we had discussed this." But the set kept going up and down, up and down, so I hit it! I felt good hitting it! And I beat the hell out of it! I kicked in the screen. I ripped off the knobs. I tore off the indoor antenna. (That appeared in a dream three nights later.) And I felt fabulous. Very Hemingway. I destroyed the machine. Man triumphs.

Two days later, I go to my dentist. I had gone to my dentist, but I had a very deep cavity and he had sent me to a chiropodist, and I'm in a building in midtown Manhattan, and

they have those sonic elevators. So I get in, and I hear a voice say, "Kindly call out your floors, please." And now I'm hip because I was to the Coast, and I say, "Sixteen, please." On the way up it says to me, "Are you the guy that hit the television set!?"

Then it took me up and down fast between floors and it threw me out in the basement and it yelled out something that was anti-Semitic.

And the upshot of the whole story is, that day I call my parents, and my mother tells me my father was fired. My father, who worked 12 years for the same firm, was fired. He was replaced with a tiny gadget that does everything my father does only much better. The depressing thing is, my mother ran out and bought one.